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600 South Commonwealth Avenue • Suite 1000 • Los Angeles • California • 90005 • 213/385-1000

October 28, 1977

Dear Public Official:

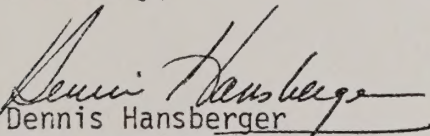
The enclosed Draft Environmental Impact Report is being transmitted to obtain your community's views on environmental matters of concern that could be attributed to the Draft Regional Housing Element. Both documents were authorized for distribution and comment by the SCAG Executive Committee on October 5, 1977.

The Draft Element has been the subject of preliminary reviews during the month of October in the Community and Economic Development Committee and its subcommittee on Housing. A public hearing on the Draft Regional Housing Element will be held on November 29, 1977, from 2-5 p.m. and 6-9 p.m., at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power building.

The Draft Regional Housing Element and companion Draft EIR will be returned to the Executive Committee December 1, 1977 for discussion. We urge you to submit your comments to SCAG prior to that date. Comments should be addressed to Louise Manuel at the SCAG offices.

Certification of the Environmental Impact Report and adoption of the Regional Housing Element have been scheduled for January 5, 1978. Again we anticipate your involvement in helping to finalize this important regional plan.

Sincerely,


Dennis Hansberger
SCAG President

DH:LM:fjw

no slip

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REGIONAL HOUSING ELEMENT ;
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

October, 1977

*Housing policy -- Environmental
aspects -- California, southern*

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EIR SUMMARY

This EIR has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 as amended. The EIR covers the Regional Housing Element; part of the continuing evolution of a comprehensive regional plan. The EIR draws heavily on existing environmental documents, specifically the Regional Transportation Plan EIR and the Environmental Assessment for the SCAG-76 Growth Forecast Policy.

Policy Impacts:

The significant impacts identified were:

1. The potential disruption of the natural environment due to the urbanization of 199,000 acres of land. (identified in SCAG-76).
2. Potential localized reduction of air quality.
3. Potential increases in seismic hazard.
4. Potential increases in energy consumption.
5. Potential changes to the urban form, including exceeding existing infrastructure capacities in some areas of the region and the causation of new infra-structures in other areas.
6. Potential economic impacts on a sub-regional level caused by the redirection of resource utilization within the region.
7. Potential social impacts due to neighborhood disruption and shifts in socio-economic groups within and between sub-regional units.

Mitigation Measures:

Policies 1 through 15 and their attendant policy actions as presented in the Element act to mitigate impacts 1-5 above by reinvestment strategies for existing urban areas, the provision for logical development in fringe areas, energy and resource conservation measures, and economic development policies. There are some social impacts which cannot be effectively mitigated if the goals of the element are to be achieved.

Unavoidable Adverse Impacts:

Localize economic impacts caused by the redirection of housing production. Social impacts due to neighborhood disruption and intra-regional shifts in various socio-economic groups.

Long Term vs. Short Term Effects

The long term benefits gained by the logical direction of forecasted growth trends, increased housing production, lessened demand for increased consumption of energy and natural resources, and the provision of adequate, affordable housing for all income levels in the region will serve to offset localized short term impacts and provide a net overall positive impact for the region in the long run.

I. Project Summary

BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

Mandate

As specified by the Congress of the United States, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has directed all states, local governments and areawide organizations utilizing Section 701 Comprehensive Planning Assistance funds to prepare a comprehensive plan which includes at least a land use and housing element. The plan and plan elements are to be updated every two years. The planning and implementation activities specified in the plan elements must be coordinated so as to be 1) internally consistent 2) coordinated with other functional elements of the comprehensive plan, and 3) consistent with functional and land use plans of other jurisdictions.

Work in Progress

SCAG's Regional Housing Element; is one element of an evolving Regional Comprehensive Plan which takes its basic direction from SCAG's Regional Development Guide; Goals and Policies for Action (adopted by the SCAG General Assembly, 1973).

The purpose of the Regional Housing Element is the further achievement of adopted Housing and Community Development goals contained in the Regional Development Guide in a timely manner. The element addresses this purpose by providing numerical assessments of current and forecast housing needs, and by providing a strategy and an implementation plan for meeting identified needs.

The assessment of current and forecast housing needs builds on two other parts of SCAG's Regional Development Guide: SCAG-76 Growth Forecast Policy (adopted December, 1975) and the Regional Housing Allocation Model (adopted April, 1977); and on the Urban Reinvestment Study (approved for distribution October, 1976). All three provide essential data defining and analyzing the region's housing needs and setting quantified goals. The Regional Housing Allocation Model is also a component of this Housing Element.

The strategy and implementation plan build on adopted policies contained in the Regional Development Guide. The Regional Housing Allocation Model and SCAG's First and Second Year Reviews of Title I, Housing and Community Development Block Grant Application (adopted August, 1975, and November, 1976, respectively); and recommended policies contained in the Urban Reinvestment Study. They also build upon policies contained in the Regional Transportation Plan (adopted April, 1977) and the Regional Conservation and Open Space Plan (adopted April, 1977). Further, they reflect new directions given by both the state and federal governments on the role regional planning agencies should pay in implementing national housing policy.*

* Both the California Statewide Housing Plan (May 1977) and recent federal regulations on the preparation of Regional Housing and Land Use Elements contain language directing regional planning agencies to include implementation plans in each of these elements.

In the past SCAG's role with regard to housing has included eight basic functions:

1. Development of regional housing goals and policy;
2. Data collection and analysis;
3. Development of the Regional Housing Allocation Model;
4. Provision of technical assistance and housing data information to local governments, state and federal agencies, and the private sector.
5. Review of local government/agency activities with regard to the provision of low and moderate income housing opportunities and related services;
6. Coordination of local government agency activities with regard to the provision of low and moderate income housing opportunities and related services;
7. Allocation of special "bonus" (Section 8) housing assistance funds in accordance with a Housing Opportunities Plan based on the Regional Housing Allocation Model;
8. Review of proposed state and federal legislation and administrative regulations regarding housing, and community and economic development.

The plan for implementing the Regional Housing Strategy contained in this Housing Element expands and further defines the scope of these functions and calls for SCAG to work with the private sector, as well as citizen groups and local governments, to solve regional housing problems.

Issues

The Regional Housing Element focuses on four issue areas:

1. Coordination and Cooperation: The relationship between governments within the region and private sector interests relative to the provision of adequate housing for the region's households.
2. Quantity: The current and forecast amounts of sound housing available and needed within the region.
3. Quality: The current and forecast condition of all housing units and the condition of neighborhoods.
4. Cost and Distribution: The affordability of housing for all income groups, and the availability of housing for all income groups in all parts of the region, with the assurance of equal housing choices and opportunities for all households, without regard to age, race, creed, sex or marital status in each jurisdiction.

Overall Objectives

Specific needs are identified for each issue area. A design for meeting these needs is identified. The objectives are:

Coordination and Cooperation

1. Coordinate the activities of governments, citizen groups and the private sector relative to the provision of adequate housing for all households.
2. Establish SCAG as agency in charge of regularly assessing and publishing regional housing needs.

Quantity

3. Promote the production of new housing in the region in appropriate amounts in those areas identified as most needy by the SCAG Growth Policy, Regional Housing Allocation Model, and Urban Reinvestment Study.

Quality

4. Promote new high quality, land and resource conserving housing.
5. Maintain the existing stock in good condition, preserving affordability.
6. Rehabilitate deteriorated units, preserving affordability
7. Assure the provision of adequate public and private facilities and services in all residential areas.
8. Promote environmental and aesthetic quality in all residential areas.
9. Assure residential security and safety

Cost and Distribution

10. Slow the rising cost of new and existing housing.
11. Reduce the cost of new construction and land.
12. Encourage expanded job opportunities in low income areas.
13. Urge expansion of federal housing assistance programs for low- and moderate income households.
14. Prepare criteria for distribution of low and moderate income housing.
15. Establish Affirmative Action Program to provide equal opportunity in housing.

Strategy

The Regional Housing Strategy indicates which housing needs are most critical, and therefore deserving of public policy attention, in each of four types of cities and communities.

1. Reinvestment Cities and Communities with comparatively large amounts of deteriorated housing needs to be replaced or rehabilitated and a predominance of lower income residents, many of whom need jobs and/ or income subsidies. New housing production, housing rehabilitation activities, and economic development are critically needed in these cities to meet current and forecast housing needs and to improve the local tax base.
2. Potential Reinvestment Cities and Communities with moderate amounts of deteriorated housing needing to be replaced or rehabilitated, and large amounts of housing needing maintenance to prevent projected deterioration. These cities have moderate numbers of lower income residents, many of whom need housing assistance. The tax base in these communities is fairly stable, but has a potential to decline in the near future.
3. Economically Sound Cities and Communities with little deteriorated housing, few lower income residents, and a stable and adequate tax base, and/or sufficient economic growth to support essential public facilities and services. Housing prices in these areas almost totally preclude housing opportunities for lower income households. Many cities in this category are experiencing rapid population growth as well as economic growth.
4. Desert and Rural Communities: Communities outside the urbanized area of the region, with unique and different housing problems.

The combined indicator of housing deterioration and potential deterioration "unsound units plus sound units with low income prospects", was used to divide the urban cities which make up a single housing market into the first three categories. Desert and rural communities were grouped together because they constitute a separate housing market. The cities in each category are shown in map 2, titled "Regional Housing Strategy".

Implementation Plan

The plan for implementing the strategy describes public and private actions which could help remedy regional housing problems. The plan has two main components. One regional, one local. The Regional Component includes a set of Policies and Policy-Actions addressing each need. Because housing needs cannot be adequately addressed exclusively, or even primarily through public action however, the Implementation Plan contains recommendations mainly designed to stimulate or guide private action or investment. The regional component of the plan also recommends the development of four special public/private sector task forces, one for each of the four types of cities described above. Each task force would include elected officials and private sector representatives from the cities and communities in each category, and would be charged with developing a plan for coordinating public and private sector activities and increasing the flow of capital resources toward the solution of common housing problems.

The Local Programs Component of the Implementation Plan provides local jurisdictions with a range of program and regulatory options for use in meeting identified needs. Each program is described in terms of its legal authority, necessary structure, the type of need it addresses, and how and where it is now being used.

Support Documentation

The needs data presented in this Regional Housing Element were taken in large part from three SCAG publications:

1. SCAG-76: Growth Forecast Policy
2. Regional Housing Allocation Model
3. Urban Reinvestment Study

The reader is referred to these reports for more specific data and explanation of the methodologies used to determine these needs.

II. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The environmental setting for the project is presented in its entirety in the SCAG Regional Transportation Plan EIR; April 1977. The Regional Housing Element EIR hereby incorporates the Environmental Setting section of that report - pages 3 through 44. Copies of the RTP EIR are available at the following locations:

SCAG Offices (Resource Center)
600 S. Commonwealth Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90005

California Department of Transportation
District 07, c/o Alyce David
120 S. Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

California Dept. of Transportation
District 08, Silva Gonzales
247 Third Street
San Bernardino, California 92403

California Department of Transportation
District 11, c/o Judy Kirby
P.O. Box 81406
2829 Juan Street
San Diego, California 92138

Imperial County Library
c/o Head Librarian
247 S. Imperial Avenue
Imperial, California 92251

L.A. County Public Library
c/o William R. Kinman System
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

L.A. Municipal Documents
Library
c/o Miss Dewey
City Hall East, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90012

L.A. Planning Library
c/o Sarah Wolf
618 City Hall
Los Angeles, California 90012

L.A. Public Library
c/o Miss Right
Business & Economic Department
630 West Fifth Street
Los Angeles, California 90017

Orange County Main Library
c/o Mrs. Burch
11200 Stanford Street
Garden Grove, California 92640

San Bernardino City Library
c/o Head Librarian
401 North Arrowhead Avenue
San Bernardino, California 92401

San Bernardino County Library
c/o Mrs. Foncher
104 West 4th Street
San Bernardino, California 92415

UCLA Research Library
c/o Cataloging Librarian
415 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, California

USC Doheny Library
c/o Cataloging Librarian
University Park
Los Angeles, California 90007

Ventura County & City Library
c/o Mrs. Baxter
651 East Main Street
Ventura, California 93001

Riverside City Central Library
c/o Head Librarian
3581 Seventh Street
Riverside, California 92501

Linda L. Adams, Librarian
Government Publications Dept.
The University Library
University of California
Irvine, California 92713

For purposes of the Regional Housing Element EIR, a summary of the Regional Environmental setting is provided, under the following headings:

- o Natural Environment
- o Land Use and Urban Form
- o Economy
- o Social Environment
- o Air Quality
- o Energy

Natural Environment - Prominent factors in the geomorphology and geology, soils, climate, hydrology and water quality, vegetation and wildlife and natural hazards environments are discussed under this heading - critical factors include; many active center faults with the attendant earthquake potential, frequent temperature inversion layers which contribute to air quality problems, water quality problems in several parts of the region, several imperiled wetland areas, and potential hazards from earthquake, flood and fire.

Land Use and Urban Form - Three conceptual divisions have been made relative to this category as follows: 1) land use; 2) land-use infrastructure; and 3) population distribution and forecasts for future growth.

Land Use - The SCAG Region covers 24.5 million acres of which about 1.0 million acres are urbanized. However, much of the region is inhospitable to human settlement because of mountain and desert terrain. Agricultural land use involves about 1.7 million acres.

Many business and activity centers exist. Regional office locations exist in approximately 13 clusters, and retail and industrial activity is dispersed throughout.

Land-Use Infrastructure - Transportation facilities, water, electrical, and natural gas distribution systems have all had an impact on the direction and pace of development on the region.

Population - Distribution and forecasts for future growth - In 1975 the total regional population was 10,335,100; 85% of this number lived in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Migration into the region during the 1950's and early 1960's was unparalleled in the nation. Now, in-and out migrations in the region are about equal. SCAG '76 forecasts a regional population in 1990 of 12.25 million people.

Regional Economy - The SCAG region has a diverse and active economy. Historically, it has been based on agriculture, oil extraction, aerospace and aviation, and tourism/recreation. However, the past decade has shown a trend toward even more diversification. Approximately, 10% of the GNP comes from the SCAG region. Employment is most concentrated in the central Los Angeles area. However, major growth is occurring in the Irvine and Warner center areas.

Social Environment - The SCAG region represents a diversity of social and cultural characteristics in its population, institutions and artifacts.

The 1970 regional racial mix was as follows:

Anglo	7.2 million
Blacks	0.8 million
Spanish-American	1.7 million
Other	.3 million

Incomes and educational levels are highest in western, coastal counties of the region.

The residential character of the region is largely one of single-family dwellings, although multi-family housing starts are increasing. About 53% of all SCAG housing units are owner occupied. About 500,000 SCAG area residents live in substandard units. This group is composed primarily of the poor, elderly, and minorities. This group also comprises the core of those who are transportation disadvantaged and transit dependent.

Air Quality - Air quality in portions of the SCAG Region is a matter of critical concern. The Clean Air Act sets the basic framework for the development of plans and actions to achieve improved air quality.

Recent data indicates that improvement in air quality is occurring in the SCAG Region. However, latest estimates also indicate that ambient air quality standards will not be met within the next ten years for several pollutants.

Energy - Increasing competition for resources provides the background for the current energy-related connections between the region and the world.

Nationwide energy demand has been growing 4% to 5% annually. Consumption of oil has risen much more rapidly (7% a year), reflecting a major shift of power-plant fuel in the east and midwest from coal to oil. While demand has increased nationwide, U.S. oil production has declined, causing a rapid increase in oil imports.

Constant oil-price increases affect every segment of the economy; one result has been higher demand and higher prices for other sources of energy -- coal, domestic oil, natural gas, and even geothermal steam. Post-1972 price changes have increased the real cost of oil (measured in 1948 dollars), reversing a long-standing trend of declining relative costs. Between 1948 and 1972, the real cost of oil declined by 30% and coal by 40%. On the same scale, oil now cost around 150% more than in 1948.

Transportation is the region's largest energy-consumption sector. The fuels on which it depends are processed predominantly by refineries located in the Los Angeles - Long Beach area. Their combined processing capacity is about one million barrels of crude oil daily.

III. POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Natural Environment

Impacts:

The Housing Element as a part of an evolving regional comprehensive plan takes its basic direction from SCAG's Regional Development Guide: Goals and Policies for Action. The element specifically uses SCAG-76 Growth Forecast Policy as a guide to the expected growth trends in the region through 1990 and the number to housing units which will be necessary to accommodate that growth. As such the majority of the impacts to the natural environment have been addressed in the environmental analysis section of SCAG-76 and will be summarized here. (Copies of SCAG-76 are available from SCAG, 600 South Commonwealth, Los Angeles, California, 90005.) Impacts specific to the housing element will be so identified.

The SCAG forecast on which this element is based shows a need for 410,000 new housing units by 1980 and an additional 950,000 new units by 1990. Even with urban reinvestment strategies, to produce the housing units to meet the needs stated above will require the conversion of 199,000 acres of currently vacant land. There is a potential for significant impacts due to this conversion in terms of:

1. The disruption or overcovering of soils and potential changes in topography.
2. Possible changes in water absorption rates and drainage patterns.
3. Potential changes in the numbers and/or diversity of species of Flora and Fauna.
4. Reductions of open space.

The total impacts of the element on the natural environment cannot be measured at this time. The magnitude of these impacts are dependant on specific locations and numbers of developments predicated by the element and the physical design and layout of those developments.

Mitigation Measures:

The housing element contains policy and policy action measures which in-and-of themselves act as measures to mitigate potential impacts on the natural environment, (specifically policies 3, 3.1, 3.2, 6 and policy actions 3-B, 6-C, 7-A, 9-B, 7-C, 11-A, 11-B). Generally these policies and policy action statements direct future construction into existing urban areas rather than continue construction on the fringes of the urban areas. By directing future construction into existing urban areas, as much as feasible, the potential impacts on existing natural environments will be minimized.

The policies also support rehabilitation and maintenance of existing units to lengthen their useful life and lessen the need for additional new units. This also lessens the demand for the use of additional natural resources and the attendant environment impacts.

Also, internal consistency of the element with other SCAG documents such as the Regional Transportation Plan, the Conservation and Open Space Plan, and the Development Guide, helps ensure that impacts on the natural environments will be minimized. Specific environmentally sensitive areas within the urbanized areas are, for the most part, protected by existing legislation such as the California Coastal Zone Conservation Act, and Coastal Conservancy Act.

Individual projects generated in response to the element will address impacts for their specific sites as part of the pre-development process.

Seismic Safety

Impacts:

The housing element using the SCAG Development Guide as a basis for its policies will tend to increase densities in the existing urban areas. This will increase the total seismic hazard.

Mitigation Measures:

The reinvestment strategy could cause the demolition of seismically unsafe buildings for replacement by new units built to current seismic codes. This would reduce the overall seismic hazard.

Policy #9 of the element supports the use of proven structural design in the construction of new units thereby reducing the total seismic hazard.

Air Quality

Impacts:

Most of the air quality impacts produced by this element will be of a beneficial nature. Although emphasis is placed upon directing new construction towards existing urban areas, thereby increasing densities and the potential for localized air quality degradation, policies such as 14, 14-A, and 14-B which work to locate housing near employment should in fact act to reduce the dependency on the automobile and reduce VMT, thereby promoting improved air quality.

Policies 4 and 6, which stress construction of energy efficient new units and the rehabilitation of existing units serve to reduce demand for increased usage of natural resources and energy consumption and the attendant air quality reduction of such increased usage.

There is a potential for short term air quality reduction from any rehabilitation and construction activities generated as a result of this element. These impacts are those normally associated with construction, such as dust and short term air quality reduction due to operation of mechanical equipment.

Mitigation Measures:

Inasmuch, as long term impacts from this element are seen as beneficial in terms of improving or not degrading air quality, no mitigation measures are needed, or proposed.

Short term impacts associated with rehabilitation and new construction activities can be mitigated by local dust control ordinance and state air quality requirements for machinery.

Energy:

Impacts:

Although rehabilitation and new construction activities generated as a result of this element have the potential to increase energy consumption on the short term, the net impact in the long term should be beneficial in terms of reducing the demands of increased energy consumption.

Policies 3, 4, and 12 which encourage the location of housing near job opportunities reduce commuting and the use of private automobiles, thereby helping to reduce energy consumption.

Emphasis on rehabilitation and maintenance of existing units, while requiring energy, should have an overall positive effect by lessening the need for new construction and thereby the use of additional natural resources and energy demands associated with that use.

Similarly, policy supporting the construction of energy efficient units serve to reduce the tendency towards increased energy demands.

Mitigation Measures:

None proposed.

Land Use and Urban Form

Impacts:

Impacts on land use as a result of implementing the policies in the element consist primarily of redirecting the existing land use patterns in some areas and reinforcing them in other areas. By directing new construction away from urban fringe areas the existing land use trends will be somewhat curtailed. This redirection also carries the potential for a change in land uses in existing areas by correcting obsolete or inefficient land uses to residential development.

The emphasis placed upon rehabilitation will serve to reinforce some existing land uses. Prolonging the lives of existing structures, will reduce the possibility of conversion to alternative land uses.

The element has the possibility of impacting the urban form in terms of the impacts placed upon both existing and potential new infra-structures. Production of new units has the potential to overload existing infra-structures or, if located in fringe areas, of requiring new infra-structures. Because the exact locations of new construction or substantial rehabilitation projects is not known it is impossible to quantify impacts at this time, with the exception of waste water treatment facilities. SCAG-76 shows that if the expected growth trends occur, capacities of existing treatment facilities in portions of all counties in the region will be exceeded by 1990.

Mitigation Measures:

Rehabilitation projects, are not seen as adversely impacting Land Use or the Urban form. Consequently, no mitigation measures are proposed for that portion of the element.

Policies such as 7, 7-A, 7-B, 12-A, and 12-B serve to mitigate possible impacts from new housing construction associated with the element. These policies are designed to ensure that new housing production is coordinated with infrastructure capacities in existing urban areas and in undeveloped areas. The policies also will attempt to attract both private and public investment into these areas to help ensure adequate infra-structure capacities.

The emphasis on directing new construction towards existing urban areas also reduces the need for new infra-structures.

Section 208 of the Clean Water Act authorizes land use planning in terms of non point sources of water pollution. SCAG, as the 208 planning agency for this region, in working with local governments and water and sanitation districts in advancing water planning and protection to address projected needs and growth trends.

Economic

Impacts:

The primary economic impacts are really in terms of opportunity costs. The major emphasis of the element on redirecting the existing regional growth trends, as projected in SCAG-76, away from the urban fringe and back into existing urbanized areas may produce adverse economic impacts on those fringe areas, in terms of limiting housing, commercial, and/or industrial growth. Conversely, the redirection of growth trends will beneficially impact existing urban areas, especially reinvestment cities.

These beneficial impacts are produced by policies which encourage job development, housing production, and reinvestment in these areas. There are also indirect benefits associated with these policies. By providing better access to employment, education and housing, a climate more conducive to new industry locating in the region may be produced.

Simply stated, the economic impacts of the element are the opportunity costs of infusing resources in one sub-regional area verses another. Those opportunity costs are unquantifiable at this time.

Mitigation Measures:

Policies designed to improve the overall regional economy could be considered to be mitigation measures to the economic impacts above. That the element provides policies to promote increase employment, economic development, and increased housing production serves to mitigate possible adverse impacts on the regional level and may provide a net positive regional benefit.

Potentially, these policies will not address adverse impacts suffered by sub-regional areas due to the reduction of growth in those areas.

There are no mitigation measures currently available to address those impacts and still meet the goals of this element.

Social Environment

Impacts:

The majority of the potential impacts of the element could involve the Social Environment.

The process of development and reinvestment will cause disruption in varying degrees of neighborhoods and communities and the social institutions that serve them. While the impact of individual actions may be minor, it should be recognized that the cumulative effect of such actions have the potential for creating more significant impacts.

The social impacts may be broken down into two categories, the displacement of households by reinvestment activities and the disruption of existing social systems by shifting population groups.

For the most part both categories suffer similar impacts. Although the displacement of households tend to be more economic in nature, the disruption of existing social systems tends to be more psychological. These impacts range from economic loss or gain to loss of neighborhood identity and in some cases feelings of alienation from society.

For some households the social impacts of the element will be beneficial, for some they will be adverse. For some households the impacts will be short term, for some long term.

It is impossible to identify or quantify all of the social impacts at this time.

Mitigation Measures:

The element provides some mitigation measures for social impacts. These are mainly in the form of policies to maintain affordability after rehabilitation or reinvestment and in speculation and rent controls.

Specifically, policies 10 through 15 and their related policy actions can work to mitigate some of the social impacts of disrupting neighborhoods by providing safe, decent, affordable housing.

Certain social impacts which could be associated with the movement of differing socio-economic populations into previously isolated neighborhoods have no known mitigation measures.

IV. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Several alternatives to the proposed project have been considered, and are discussed below.

- No Project - The Regional Housing Element and its component Regional Housing Allocation Model are both mandated by the 701 Comprehensive Planning guidelines of HUD. Thus, SCAG does not have discretion to consider the "no project" alternative as a viable option.

- Housing Development without policy direction - Another alternative to the proposed project would be to recommend policy actions that would not direct new housing development at all. That is, to simply propose that housing should be developed wherever possible. This alternative is unacceptable, however, because it runs contrary to adopted SCAG Regional Goals aimed at achieving balanced development. Under such a strategy more development in fringe areas would probably occur. The consequences of which would be increased impacts on the environment, especially land use and energy, less efficient land use, and the need to develop infrastructure which may not be cost effective.

- No Fringe Development - Another alternative would be to cut off any new development at the fringe and to direct all new development into existing urbanized areas. Although this strategy could accelerate the process of re-investment, the results may be densities which are beyond infrastructure capacity and which may be socially unacceptable. This alternative also would cause increased disruption of existing neighborhoods and social systems as well as generate additional relocation needs. Totally restricted growth could also drastically increase housing costs, through increased land and construction costs. There is also the potential to depress overall economy due to less construction. Moreover, such a strategy would also conflict with adopted goals and policies in housing and community development.

V. POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

The potentially significant impacts that cannot be avoided if this proposal is implemented are primarily economic or social in nature.

The economic impacts are a result of the policies in the element which would cause a shift in the allocation of economic resources and economic development within the region's sub-units. Although the impacts are not significant in terms of the entire regional economy, there is the potential for local sub-regional impacts. These impacts will occur primarily in urban fringe areas which are currently experiencing rapid growth. If the policies in the element are implemented growth in these areas could be slowed and would occur elsewhere in the region. These localized impacts cannot currently be quantified.

The social impacts relate to the fair share allocation and the provision of equal access and housing opportunities for all income levels. These policies have the potential to cause shifts in the distribution of socio-economic populations within and between sub-regional units. These impacts are not easily identified, nor are they easily measured. However, it is expected that these impacts will be significant, especially on individual sub-regional social systems.

VI. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE
MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG TERM PRODUCTIVITY

With the exceptions of the potential social and economic impacts mentioned in the section dealing with unavoidable impacts, there are no long term adverse impacts on the environment. Because of policies contained in the element the net overall effect should be an enhancement of the existing environment of air quality due to less dependency on the automobile, reduced energy demands, and the improvement of the existing urban form, due to reinvestment strategies.

The duration of any adverse social or economic impacts is indeterminable. However, the net long term effect should be a beneficial one by producing more efficient, diverse and balanced social and economic systems.

VII. THE GROWTH INDUCING IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

Although the element may indirectly produce localized growth, through housing production, it is not expected to impact growth on a regional level.

The element is intended not to cause or reduce growth trends, but instead to direct them in a logical manner to improve housing quality, cost effectiveness, and distribution.

VIII IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES WHICH WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED.

Since the housing element is a continuation in the development of a regional comprehensive plan and follows the forecasts and development policy set down in SCAG-76, the section dealing with irretrievable commitments of resources in the Environmental Analysis Section also applies to the Regional Housing Element. Those commitments were identified as:

- urbanized of 199,000 acres of land.
- construction materials for 1.3 million new dwelling units
- construction materials for buildings to accommodate 1.2 million new employees
- construction materials for new schools, hospitals, commercial and community facilities, sewers, roads, water and gas mains, and general infra-structure to serve 1.8 million new residents.
- consumption of 22,500 gigawatt hours per year of electricity
- consumption of 999,000 gallons of gas per day for automobiles
- increased consumption of natural gas
- increased consumption of fuel oils
- increased consumption of construction energy for new dwelling units, places of employment and infra-structure.

IX. DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

The following documents have been incorporated by reference and may be examined at the locations listed on page 6.

1. Regional Development Guide: Goals and Policies for Action
2. SCAG-76 Growth Forecast Policy
3. Regional Housing Allocation Model
4. Urban Reinvestment Study
5. Regional Transportation Plan and EIR
6. Regional Conservation and Open Space Plan

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